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Tahsish-Kwois Provincial Park : purpose sttement and zonin
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TAHSISH-KWOIS PROVINCIAL PARK

PURPOSE STATEMENT AND ZONING PLAN

March 2003

Approved by:

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Date:

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Environmental Stewardship Division

Date:

TAHSISH-KWOIS PROVINCIAL PARK
Purpose Statement and Zoning Plan

Primary Role
The **primary** role of Tahsish-Kwois Park is to represent the natural environment of the temperate rainforest on the west coast of Vancouver Island. The park is one of the largest on Vancouver Island with close to 11,000 hectares, and with such a large area it makes significant contributions to both the Northern Island Mountains Ecosection (NIM) and to two under-represented variants of the Coastal Western Hemlock (CWH) biogeoclimatic zone. It also makes minimal contributions to Mountain Hemlock mm1 and CWHvh1, which are two well-represented variants in the protected areas system. The most significant aspect of this park's contribution to ecosystem representation is that it preserves substantial tracts of old growth forest in an area of the province where they are extremely rare due to intensive logging pressures.

Secondary Role
The **secondary** role is to protect an undisturbed forested wilderness that preserves intact coastal watersheds and special natural features including significant fish, wildlife and rare plant habitat. The park features a giant Sitka spruce old growth stand, 1,200 metre-high mountains, a high-elevation lake (850 metres), a significant low-elevation lake (100 metres), de-watering creek channels, a scenic river canyon, u-shaped river valleys, and a fragile pristine estuary.

The park has three rivers which support all anadromous and resident salmonid species native to Vancouver Island. Only one river, the Tahsish, is not wholly contained in the park. In the estuary of the Tahsish River, the network of channels with various depths, flow characteristics and substrates provides migrating, spawning and particularly rearing habitat for provincially significant populations of salmonid species. At least ten species of fish are found in the park. The Tahsish River ranks first of all systems in Kyuquot Sound in the escapement of chinook, coho and chum salmon. Both summer and winter runs of steelhead trout are known to occur, and the summer run stock is one of only 36 such populations in the Vancouver Island region.

The watersheds which comprise Tahsish-Kwois Park are a natural ecosystem supporting viable populations of most wildlife species occurring on Vancouver Island. Major predator and fur-bearing species inhabit the area, including gray wolves, cougar, black bears, Roosevelt elk, black-tailed deer, mink, raccoon, and river otter. The lower Tahsish River valley ranks among the most important Roosevelt elk winter ranges on Vancouver Island. The park also supports a diversity of birds associated with the aquatic and old growth forest habitat.

Tahsish River Ecological Reserve is surrounded by Tahsish-Kwois Park, and its 70 hectares protect an intact productive tidal estuary containing diverse vegetation with ten identified plant communities, some rare plant species, and significant wildlife habitat.

Tertiary Role
The **tertiary** role is to provide remote recreation opportunities on the west coast of Vancouver Island. The park is quite isolated and is in an undeveloped wilderness area with no facilities available. Adventurers that undertake a kayak or hiking trip to the park are rewarded with magnificent scenery, pristine lakes and forests of giant Sitka spruce and western hemlock. Located at the head of Tahsish Inlet in Kyuquot Sound on northwestern Vancouver Island, most recreational users limit their visits to the estuary and lower reaches of Tahsish River with access by small boat or kayak. It is also possible to reach the park on foot for rugged hiking by way of

forestry roads. Activities include wildlife viewing, lake and river angling, hunting, and extensive old growth forest viewing with associated wilderness hiking, camping, and nature appreciation.

Management Issues

Known Management Issue	Response
Proximity of Indian Reserve and ecological reserve to park, results in trespass and access issues	➢ Need boundary identification around Indian Reserve and ecological reserve and interpretation information about the sensitivity of the areas and restrictions on access. ➢ Develop a small primitive campsite close to the lowest reaches of the Tahsish River to focus recreation use away from the estuary.
Impact of poaching, timber theft, fishing, upstream logging, and recreational use on the natural and scenic values of the park	➢ Work with Conservation Officers to monitor harvesting and deter poaching. ➢ Work with Ministry of Forests and forest companies to assess adjacent harvesting impact on visuals, access and wind firmness. ➢ Develop an ecosystem management plan including wildlife, vegetation and sport fishery with appropriate agencies. ➢ Encourage no-trace camping, and self-reliant short wilderness hiking excursions in the valley that minimize impacts.
Lack of detailed knowledge of natural and cultural values	➢ Conduct a fish assessment in Silburn Lake. ➢ Conduct a cultural inventory and traditional use study in conjunction with First Nations.
First Nation relations	➢ Continue to develop a working relationship with First Nations to reach a mutual understanding of park management interests.
DL 568 purchased in 2001	➢ Add DL 568 to the park in 2003.

Zoning

Special Feature Zone – covers the most notable area of Sitka spruce old growth forest and areas of critical elk habitat. It covers approximately 650 hectares or 6% of the park. The objective of this zone is to preserve and present significant natural or cultural values because of their special character, fragility or heritage value. Management is oriented towards a high level of resource protection with ongoing monitoring. Visitor access may be restricted to preserve a high quality recreational and interpretive experience associated with sight-seeing and nature appreciation.

Wilderness Recreation Zone – covers the rest of the park, an area of 10,179 hectares or 94% of the park. The objective of this zone is to protect a remote, undisturbed natural landscape and to provide backcountry recreation opportunities dependent on a pristine environment where air access may be permitted at designated sites. This zone is characterized by very low use with minimal facility development for user safety and convenience and the protection of the environment. Approved facilities include trails, primitive campsites and shelters. Hunting is allowed in this zone.

Conservation

Representation - ecosection	☒	Tahsish-Kwois Park is the fourth largest contributor (5.4%) to the representation of the Windward Island Mountains Ecosection, which is well represented in the protected areas system at 17.4%. Insignificant contribution (0.02%) to the representation of the under-represented Northern Island Mountains Ecosection.
- biogeoclimatic subzone/variant	☒	Tahsish-Kwois Park contributes 4.1% to the representation of CWHvm1, making it 5th out of 57 protected areas that contribute to its representation. CWHvm1 is under-represented in the protected areas system (PAS) at 7%. Tahsish-Kwois contributes 2.9% to the representation of CWHvm2, which is under-represented in the PAS at 8.7%. It also makes minimal contributions to CWHvh1 (0.9%) and MHmm1 (0.4%), which are both well-represented at 19.3% and 16% respectively.
Special Features	☒	Record tree – western hemlock, estuary, significant elk/deer/bear habitat, old growth Sitka spruce forest, complete watersheds, fisheries values – especially the summer run of steelhead trout.
Rare/Endangered Values	☒	Blue-listed species cutthroat trout, Dolly Varden, Roosevelt elk, trumpeter swan, Canada goose (subspecies *occidentalis*). Tallest western hemlock tree in BC (76m).
Scientific/Research Opportunities	☒	Benchmark for environmental change, old growth, fish species, ungulate habitat

Recreation

Representation backcountry	☒	Large wilderness area, backcountry values such as old growth forests and wild rivers
destination	☐	Not Applicable
travel corridor	☐	Boat exploration of the west coast of Vancouver Island
local recreation	☒	Hunting, fishing, kayaking
Special Opportunities	☒	Guided recreation, old growth and intact watershed appreciation, exploration of a pristine estuary
Education/Interpretation Opportunities	☒	Offsite interpretation, and information signs in the park at key access points about natural and cultural values

Cultural Heritage

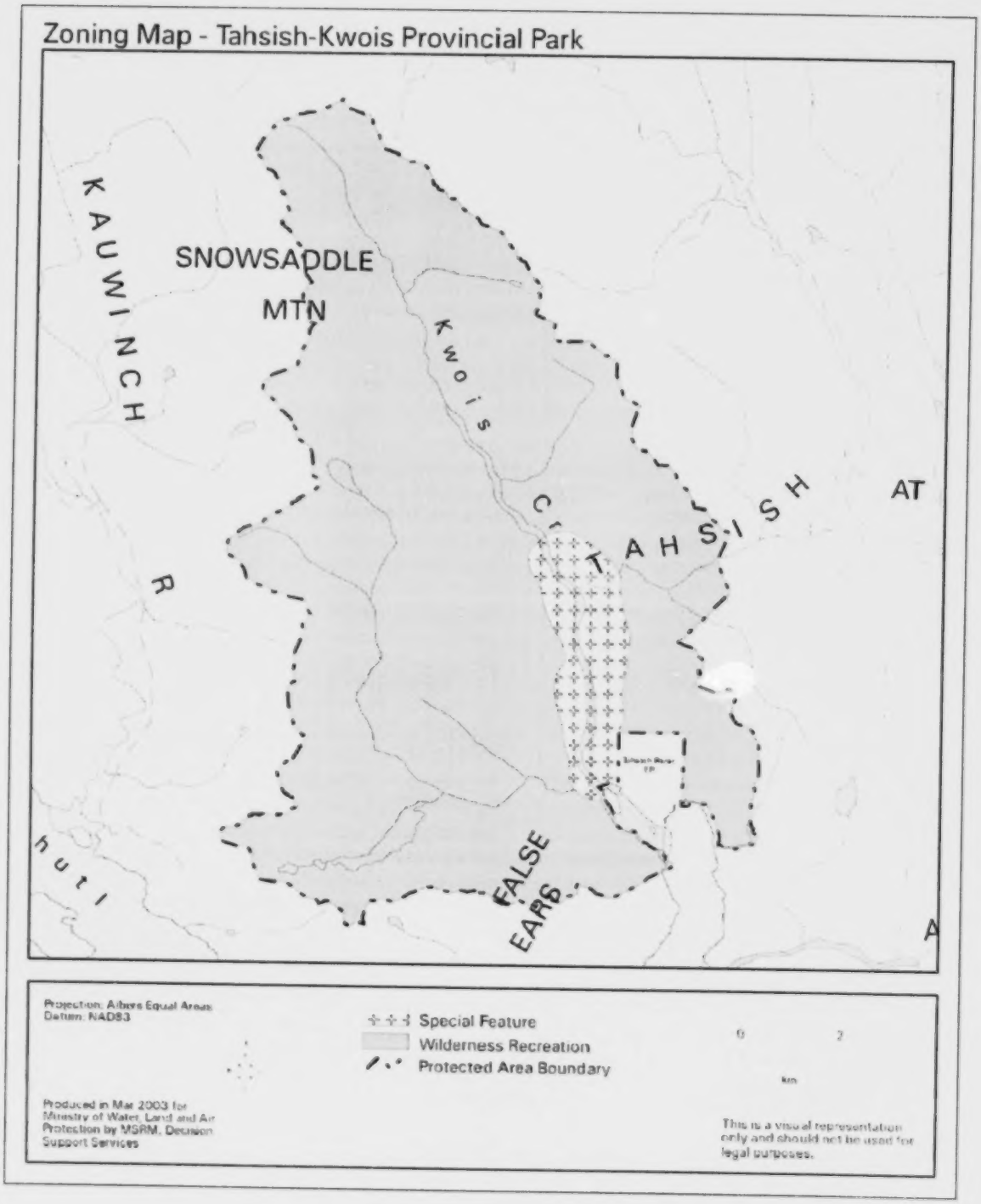
Representation	☒	Part of a trade route for east and west coast First Nation tribes traveling between Broughton Strait and Kyuquot Sound, via lower Nimpkish River, Nimpkish Lake, Atluck Lake, and Tahsish River ending at Tahsish Inlet. Post-contact history: British naval vessel *HMS Hecate* made a survey of Kyuquot Sound, giving contemporary names to numerous sites in the area. Lieutenant Hankin from this ship, crossed the overland trade route with the help of native guides (first European to cross Vancouver Island).
Special Feature	☒	Archaeological sites, culturally modified trees, pictograph, ancient fish weirs, village site nearby in IR 11

Other Management Considerations

Other Designations	☐	Not Applicable
Relationship to other PAs	☒	Part of a system of large wilderness protected areas in the north end of Vancouver Island. Tahsish River Ecological Reserve is encompassed in the park boundary.
Co-operative Management Arrangements	☐	Not Applicable
Partnerships	☐	Not Applicable
Vulnerability	☒	Natural values are vulnerable to poaching, timber theft, and upstream logging
Relationship to other Strategies	☒	Designated as a result of recommendations in the Vancouver Island Land Use Plan. DL 568 was purchased in 2001 as an addition to the park to protect valuable estuary habitat in the mouth of the Tahsish River and old growth forest.

Area: 10,829.1 hectares

Date of establishment: July 12, 1995


Zoning Map - Tahsish-Kwois Provincial Park
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Special Feature
Wilderness Recreation
Protected Area Boundary
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km
Produced in Mar 2003 for
Ministry of Water, Land and Air
Protection by MSRM, Decision
Support Services
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